



John R. Kasich, *Governor*
Debe Terhar, *President, State Board of Education*
Stan W. Heffner, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

July 27, 2012

Mr. Dave Yost
Auditor of State
88 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Auditor Yost:

I am in electronic receipt of your letter dated July 26, 2012 concerning falsified attendance records at Columbus Public Schools and Toledo Public Schools as well as the discovery by ODE of record falsifications in Lockland Public Schools. Speaking for the State Board of Education we consider the falsification of attendance records anywhere in the Ohio public school system to be a very serious matter. That is why the Board agreed that State Superintendent Heffner should conduct a joint investigation with your office into these allegations.

Based on the fact that irregularities in attendance records have occurred in three widely geographically separated districts in Ohio, the problem may be much more widespread than was initially thought. I understand that to conduct a thorough and complete investigation, all parties involved in handling attendance records must be thoroughly audited. This includes not only Ohio local school districts, but also the Ohio Department of Education which is the final repository of these reports. At your request, I can confirm from my conversation with State Superintendent Heffner on July 26, 2012, that he will continue to ensure complete and total cooperation by ODE with your office in the next phase of your audit.

As President of the State Board of Education and speaking for my colleagues on the State Board, we desire a thorough and complete audit of student attendance records at all levels of the system. Where wrongdoing is found, action should and must be taken. In addition, I would hope that your audit will also confirm those segments of the education system where no irregularities are discovered so that the reputation and integrity of the Ohio education system does not suffer based on unfounded supposition.

You note in your letter that there is no evidence that anyone at ODE was involved in attendance record falsification, but you surmise that since the nature of the practice was widespread, there was in some way a lack of oversight of this process and data by ODE. I agree that your audit should proceed independently of ODE. I request that your office is particularly focused on areas of wrongdoing and the determination of the level in the system where the wrongdoing may have occurred. The determination of what level of oversight should have existed I would hope is done based on the level of data and the fact that ODE has just concluded a year-long investigation into this data falsification practice in the Lockland School District.

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The State Board of Education and ODE have a statutory role to play in uncovering data falsification. The State Board of Education and ODE will strive to do our part to uncover the false reporting of data, just as we have with the recently completed investigation of the Lockland School District. In addition, we will pursue professional sanctions against any licensed individuals suspected of involvement in data falsification.

Please let me know how I and the State Board of Education can assist you in your efforts.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Debe Terhar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debe" and last name "Terhar" clearly distinguishable.

Debe Terhar
President
State Board of Education of Ohio

cc: Stan Heffner, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Members of the Ohio State Board of Education
John Kasich, Governor of the State of Ohio
Members of the Ohio Legislature